



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 7, 2006

*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

For Information Contact Public Affairs
ANN HARWOOD
Telephone: (602) 514-7737
Cell: (602) 809-3683

WOMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR ATTEMPTING TO SMUGGLE TWO ILLEGAL ALIEN CHILDREN

TUCSON, Ariz. -- The United States Attorneys for the District of Arizona, announced that on today's date Yossi Marielena Tamayo, 39, of Tucson, Arizona, was sentenced to 15 months prison to be followed by 3 years supervised release, by United States District Judge Raner C. Collins.

On February 27, 2005, Yossi Marielena Tamayo attempted to enter the United States from the Republic of Mexico at the Nogales Port of Entry in Arizona. She was accompanied by her daughter-in-law, Carmen Kristine Gonzales, and two young Mexican citizens - a boy and an infant girl. When questioned regarding the citizenship of the children, Ms. Tamayo said that the two children were her grandchildren and were the children of her daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law falsely stated that the children were hers and then provided two Arizona birth certificates of her own two children as proof of their identification. When an agent asked the oldest child his name in English, he did not answer and appeared groggy. Ms. Tamayo told the agent that the boy had just eaten and believed the child may be having a reaction to food. When the agent asked the boy his name in Spanish, the boy mumbled "Edwin." All were referred to secondary inspection to investigate further. In secondary, the boy was asked if he knew Ms. Tamayo and the other woman to which he stated that they were taking him to his mother.

Ms. Tamayo admitted that a friend of hers had contacted her and asked if she was willing to smuggle his niece and nephew into the United States. Ms. Tamayo told him that she would have to think about it and then contacted her friend in California for advice on how to smuggle the children and how much she should charge. The friend informed her to charge \$850.00 per child and to clean/dress them up well. Ms. Tamayo told the agents that she then called her friend back and agreed to smuggle the children for \$850.00 each. Ms. Tamayo stated that she then recruited her daughter-in-law to assist in the smuggling. Ms. Tamayo further told agents that she purchased a bottle of children's allergy liquid medication in Green Valley enroute to Nogales so that she could give the medication to the mother of the children. Ms. Tamayo stated she met the mother of the children at a hotel in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, and that the mother then gave the boy half of the bottle of medication to calm the boy down. Ms. Tamayo admitted telling the parents of the children to cut the baby girl's hair and purchase boy clothing for her.

The daughter-in-law told agents that Ms. Tamayo had recruited her to help in smuggling the children and to bring her own children's Arizona birth certificates to smuggle the illegal alien children in. She stated she was to receive an undetermined amount of money from

-MORE-

Tamayo for assisting. Agents determined that the oldest boy was 5 years old and the baby girl was 13 months old. The children were turned over to the Mexican Consulate in Nogales who then relinquished the children to their mother. The former daughter-in-law had previously pled guilty and was sentenced to probation.

Ms. Tamayo pled guilty to Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens for Profit, in violation of Title 8, United States Code, Sections 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii), 1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I), and 1324(a)(1)(B)(i), a felony, on February 8, 2006. She had been charged with three charges involving Conspiracy to Transport Illegal Aliens for profit and Transporting Illegal Aliens for Profit.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Custom and Border Protection Agency in Nogales, Arizona. The prosecution was handled by Raquel Arellano, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-0584-TUC-RCC
RELEASE NUMBER: 2006-121(Tamayo)

#